



STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO HB 4151 SELF SERVE GASOLINE

To: Joint Committee on Transportation
From: United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555
Date: February 4th, 2022

Chair Beyer, Chair McClain, Vice Chair Boquist, Vice Chair Boshart Davis, and members of the committee,

We thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 4151, regarding self-serve gasoline. UFCW Local 555 is the largest private sector labor union in Oregon, representing workers from a number of industries, including grocery, retail, food processing, manufacturing, and healthcare. We are a diverse group of workers who take pride in acting as a strong collective voice for working people.

UFCW Local 555 represents many gas attendants in Oregon. We are deeply concerned about the ramifications of this bill for our members and for Oregonians who — due to age or ability — have difficulty pumping their own gasoline. While the measure proposes to maintain a certain level of staffing at gas stations (which we appreciate), it nevertheless represents the first cut in a pathway that will lead to the reduction and subsequent disappearance of jobs, and a higher risk of spills and dangerous accidents.

Notably, Oregon and New Jersey — the two states without self-serve gasoline stations (although Oregon recently has allowed a limited amount of self-service in very specific circumstances) — have historically shown statistically lower flu contagion rates than their counterparts. While two states out of 50 is not a definitive statistical model, the r-squared value of .05 regarding the relationship between gasoline service policy and flu contagion is enough to warrant additional inquiry. Simply put: As new, more contagious COVID variants appear, Oregon may want to re-think adopting a policy that would lead to many traveling people necessarily grabbing a common pump handle.

Further, during times of panic — brought on by either natural disasters, pandemic, or other factors — our members have seen firsthand that the impulse of some people to hoard commodities can often lead to conflict. We would urge lawmakers to consider what such activity would look like at a gas pump; other states have seen panicked consumers attempting to stockpile gasoline in buckets, tupperware, and even in some cases plastic bags!

UNITED FOOD & COMMERCIAL WORKERS LOCAL 555

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Our members are trained to use gas pumps safely and effectively, and stations across the state have implemented policies that keep pumps disinfected and reduce the risk of spreading illness. Gas attendants are one of many front-line job sectors designated as “essential” during the COVID-19 pandemic. They showed up to work to continue serving our communities at great personal risk. Let’s not ignore their sacrifice by ripping away that designation.

We urge you to vote NO on House Bill 4151.

Sincerely,

Madison Walters
Political Liaison
UFCW Local 555

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